



## GREEN SPRING GARDENS PARK

### PLANT INFORMATION SHEET

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### RECOMMENDED GROUNDCOVERS FOR THE WASHINGTON, D.C. AREA

Enliven the area at your feet by growing a diversity of groundcovers and not just turf.

Groundcovers can:

- help unify a landscape by tying together plants of different shapes, sizes, colors, and textures (example: bulbs and groundcovers are an excellent combination).
- prevent erosion.
- provide seasonal interest.
- regulate foot traffic when used as an edging for pathways.

The following are useful definitions:

- Cultivar (cv.) – a cultivated variety designated by single quotes (e.g., 'Pictum'). A **variety (var.)** or **subspecies (subsp.)**, in contrast, is found in nature and is a subdivision of a species.
- Part shade – the amount of light in an area shaded part of the day, among deciduous trees with high branches, among deciduous trees with foliage that is not heavy, or among thinned deciduous woods.
- Full shade – the amount of light under a dense deciduous tree canopy or beneath evergreens.

The following is a list of deciduous and evergreen (to semi-evergreen) groundcovers that perform well in the Washington, D.C. area. Some of these plants are sun-loving (6 hours or more of sunlight daily), while others are shade-loving. Most of these plants prefer a moist, well-drained site. Light requirements and special cultural requirements or tolerances are noted in the comments column. Recommended cultivars are noted in parentheses. Species that are native to Virginia are marked with an asterisk (\*).

#### DECIDUOUS GROUNDCOVERS

Scientific Name	Common Name	Comments
<i>Anemone x hybrida</i> cvs.; <i>A. tomentosa</i> 'Robustissima' is also excellent	Japanese Anemone	Full sun (moist site) to part shade
<i>Asarum canadense</i> *	Wild Ginger	Part shade to full shade in consistently moist sites

<i>Aster divaricatus</i> * (now <i>Eurybia divaricata</i> ) ( <i>A. cordifolius</i> * [now <i>Symphotrichum cordifolium</i> ] - best for naturalistic use)	White Wood Aster	Light shade to full shade; reseeds readily; tolerates dry sites
<i>Athyrium filix-femina</i> subsp. <i>asplenoides</i> * <i>A. niponicum</i> 'Pictum'	Lady Fern, Southern Lady Fern Japanese Painted Fern	Light shade to full shade  Light shade to part shade; both species tolerate alkaline soil (pH above 7)
<i>Carex siderosticha</i> 'Variegata' ('Island Brocade' has golden variegation & grows more slowly)	Creeping Variegated Broad-leaved Sedge	Light shade to part shade
<i>Ceratostigma plumbaginoides</i>	Leadwort	Full sun to part shade
<i>Chasmanthium latifolium</i> *	River Oats	Full sun to part shade; reseeds readily in moist sites
<i>Chelone obliqua</i> *	Pink Turtlehead	Full sun to part shade in moist to wet sites
<i>Coreopsis verticillata</i> * 'Grandiflora' & 'Zagreb'	Threadleaf Coreopsis	Full sun; tolerates dry sites
<i>Dennstaedtia punctilobula</i> *	Hay-scented Fern	Light shade to part shade; tolerates relatively dry sites
<i>Dryopteris goldiana</i> *	Goldie's Fern	Light shade to part shade
<i>Galium odoratum</i>	Sweet Woodruff	Light shade to full shade; keep away from natural areas
<i>Hemerocallis</i> species & hybrids	Daylily	Full sun to part shade
<i>Hosta sieboldiana</i> ('Elegans') & hybrids of many species	Hosta	Light shade to part shade
<i>Onoclea sensibilis</i> *	Sensitive Fern	Light shade to part shade; moist to wet sites; tolerates alkaline soil
<i>Panicum virgatum</i> * ( 'Rotstrahlbusch' & 'Heavy Metal' are some of the best for groundcover use)	Switchgrass	Full sun; tolerant of wet sites; very drought tolerant
<i>Pennisetum alopecuroides</i> ( 'Cassian', 'Hameln') <i>P. orientale</i>	Fountain Grass  Hardy Oriental Fountain Grass	Full sun
<i>Phegopteris (Thelypteris) decursive-pinnata</i> <i>P. (Thelypteris) hexagonoptera</i> *	Japanese Beech Fern  Broad Beech Fern	Light shade to part shade; <i>P. hexagonoptera</i> tolerates full shade
<i>Polygonatum odoratum</i> var. <i>pluriflorum</i> 'Variegatum'	Variegated Japanese Solomon's Seal	Light shade to part shade
<i>Pycnanthemum muticum</i> *	Mountain Mint	Full sun to light shade; tolerates dry sites; can spread rapidly in moist sites
<i>Rosa</i> 'Petite Pink' ('Petite Pink Scotch')	Petite Pink Rose	Full sun; can be semi-evergreen; tolerates dry sites

<i>Rudbeckia fulgida</i> * (var. <i>speciosa</i> *, 'Goldsturm')	Orange Coneflower	Full sun to light shade
<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i> * (‘The Blues’ is a lovely cv. but needs sandier, dry soils to minimize flopping)	Little Bluestem	Full sun; very drought tolerant
<i>Solidago sphacelata</i> * ‘Golden Fleece’	Golden Fleece Goldenrod	Full sun to light shade; very drought tolerant
<i>Sporobolus heterolepsis</i> *	Prairie Dropseed	Full sun; very drought tolerant
<i>Symphytum grandiflorum</i>	Ground Comfrey	Full sun to part shade
<i>Thelypteris noveboracensis</i> *	New York Fern	Light shade to full shade
<i>Tricyrtis</i> hybrids: <i>T. formosana</i> var. <i>stolonifera</i> & ‘Sinonome’	Toad Lily	Light shade to part shade
<i>Vancouveria hexandra</i>	Vancouveria, White Insideout Flower	Light shade to full shade in moist to dry sites
<i>Verbena</i> (now <i>Glandularia</i> ) ‘Homestead Purple’	Homestead Purple Verbena	Full sun in well-drained sites (short-lived if not well-drained)
<i>Viola canadensis</i> *	Canadian Violet, Tall White Violet	Light shade to part shade in consistently moist sites
<i>V. pubescens</i> *	Downy Yellow Violet	Light shade to part shade
<i>V. striata</i> *	Striped Cream Violet	Full sun (moist sites) to part shade
<i>Xanthorhiza simplicissima</i> *	Yellowroot	Light shade to part shade; adaptable to dry, moist, or periodically wet sites

#### EVERGREEN (TO SEMI-EVERGREEN) GROUNDCOVERS

Scientific Name	Common Name	Comments
<i>Carex conica</i> ‘Marginata’ (also called ‘Variegata’ or ‘Snowline’)	Variegated Sedge	Light shade to part shade
<i>C. morrowii</i> ‘Goldband’, ‘Variegata’, ‘Ice Dance’, & var. <i>temnolepsis</i> ‘Silk Tassel’	Morrow Sedge Cultivars	
<i>C. oshimensis</i> ‘Evergold’	Evergold Sedge	Full sun (moist sites) to part shade
<i>C. pensylvanica</i> *	Pennsylvania Sedge	Full sun (moist sites) to full shade; tolerates dry sites; semi-evergreen
<i>C. plantaginea</i> *	Plantainleaf Sedge	Light shade to full shade; tolerates dry sites in rich soil; semi-evergreen to evergreen
<i>Cotoneaster salicifolius</i> ‘Repens’ & ‘Scarlet Leader’	Creeping Willowleaf Cotoneaster	Full sun to light shade

<i>Epimedium x perralchicum</i> 'Frohnleiten' <i>E. pinnatum</i> subsp. <i>colchicum</i> Note: <i>E. x rubrum</i> & <i>E. x versicolor</i> 'Sulphureum' are also good groundcovers & are usually semi-evergreen in our area	Epimedium	Light shade to full shade; can take relatively dry sites once established
<i>Euphorbia amygdaloides</i> var. <i>robbiae</i>	Robb's Spurge	Light shade to full shade; tolerates dry shade
<i>Helleborus foetidus</i>  <i>H. orientalis</i> & hybrids ( <i>H. x hybridus</i> )	Bearsfoot Hellebore  Lenten Rose	Light shade to part shade; spread around by reseeding
<i>Hypericum calycinum</i>	Aaronsbeard St. Johnswort	Full sun to part shade; tolerates dry sites
<i>Iris tectorum</i>	Roof Iris	Full sun to part shade; tolerates dry sites; can be semi-evergreen
<i>Liriope muscari</i> cvs. Note: <i>L. spicata</i> is a spreader that covers an area much faster but can crowd out other plants	Blue Liriope	Full sun to full shade; <i>L. muscari</i> forms clumps; tolerate dry sites; keep away from natural areas
<i>Ophiopogon japonicus</i> ('Gyoku-Ryu' is a dwarf cv.)	Mondo Grass	Full sun to full shade; tolerates dry sites (dwarf cvs. are best in moist sites)
<i>Pachysandra procumbens</i> ('Forest Green') Note: native of WV, NC, etc.  <i>P. terminalis</i>	Alleghany Spurge  Japanese Spurge	Light shade to full shade; <i>P. procumbens</i> can be semi-evergreen; keep <i>P. terminalis</i> away from natural areas
<i>Polystichum acrostichoides</i> * <i>P. polyblepharum</i>	Christmas Fern Japanese Tassel Fern	Light shade to full shade; tolerate dry sites
<i>Rhododendron</i> – Dwarf North Tisbury hybrids (e.g., 'Michael Hill' & 'Joseph Hill')	Dwarf Azalea	Light shade to part shade
<i>Rubus calycinoides</i> ( <i>pentalobus</i> )	Ornamental Raspberry	Full sun to part shade
<i>Sarcococca hookeriana</i> var. <i>humilis</i>	Dwarf Sarcococca, Dwarf Sweet Box	Light shade to full shade
<i>Senecio aureus</i> * (now <i>Packera aurea</i> )	Golden Ragwort	Full sun to part shade; moist to wet sites; reseeds readily

<i>Tiarella cordifolia</i> * ( <i>T. cordifolia</i> var. <i>cordifolia</i> * spreads by stolons & <i>T. cordifolia</i> var. <i>collina</i> * ( <i>T. wherryi</i> ) is clump-forming (no stolons); many hybrids & cvs. available such as 'Slickrock'	Foamflower	Light shade to full shade in consistently moist sites; semi-evergreen
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© 2002. Developed by Brenda Skarphol, Curatorial Horticulturist; updated 12/2002 (Ground)